

Achievement Awards

Courage of spastics "an inspiration"

NINE finalists chosen from hundreds of courageous

British spastics travelled to London on February 5th for the judging of The Spastics Society's second annual Achievement Award. Their individual stories of determination to succeed against all odds set the judges a difficult task—all were "an inspiration," they said—but eventually Sir Geoffrey Jackson, Lady Macleod, Mr. Jack Ashley, M.P., and Mr. Graham Hill, decided that the silver trophy and cheque for £250 should go to 23-year-old Londoner Linda Berwick.

She is blind as well as spastic but, as her sponsor said in the nomination: "Linda has proved that even with a double handicap one can become a useful member of society."

The Award is made "for the most outstanding effort, or the most meritorious achievement in any field in 1973 by a spastic person in Britain." The finalists were selected from nominations put forward by teachers, University professors, social workers, neighbours, colleagues at work, relatives and friends.

The winners of the second and third prizes, generously donated like the £250 winning cheque by the Van Neste Foundation, are pictured on this page, and here are the other finalists who all received prizes of Premium Bonds.

Second
A hug for her "very special daddy" from Vanessa, daughter of second prizewinner Mr. Lawrence A. Walters of Mayswood Road, Wootton Wawen, Solihull, Warwickshire. His disability is so severe that as a child he was classed as virtually ineducable. Since then courage and determination have helped him to put such letters after his name as M.Sc., C.Eng., M.I.E.E. His wife, Marjorie, who nominated him, said: "He has surmounted great obstacles and fought courageously to prove that a spastic can progress in, and be a useful member of, modern society."

Sir Geoffrey told her: "It is with humility and pride that I present this Award to you."



Third

Receiving his third prize from Mr. Jack Ashley, M.P., is Kenneth Cooper, aged 51, of 34 Lyndhurst Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, who has overcome severe disability, including a

speech difficulty to become a highly valued librarian and established Civil Servant at the Ministry of Agriculture Research Laboratory in Lowestoft. Says the colleague who sponsored him: "He has overcome his disability in a remarkable fashion."



Special Prize

Twelve-year-old Christine Horth, of Harwich Road, Mistley, Essex, received a special prize from the Director of The Spastics Society, Mr. James Loring, and she went back to the Society's Meldreth Manor School with a massive box of chocolates to share with her friends.

It was Christine's proud parents who nominated her for the Award, telling of Christine's determination to learn to walk and declaring: "Without her courage when she was small there would be no achievement today."

Christine, said her parents, loves the other children at school and is helpful to everyone. She has been an inspiration, they said, to other parents of handicapped children who were cheered to see the little girl whom the experts once said would never walk, make such strenuous efforts to overcome a double handicap.

Picture by courtesy of The Sun

dicap always insisted to his schoolmates that he wanted to be independent, and who eventually became a teacher himself in a large school with some 500 children. Says the citation from another teacher: "Norman is one of the most reliable colleagues and friends."

John Williams, M.A., aged 32, of Hoylake, Cheshire, and probably the most severely disabled student in Britain. Despite his multiple handicaps he has pursued his university career with dogged persistence and indomitable courage, and will to succeed, coupled with a remarkable personality.

Raymond Dexter, aged 17 years, of 50 Green Lane, Bagshot, Surrey, currently studying at The Spastics Society's Thomas Delarue School in Tonbridge, Kent, and the youngest finalist. Up until the age of five Raymond was unable to walk, talk or even sit up, and was confined to a wheelchair until the age of 12. Today he has learned to talk and walk unaided.

Christopher Hills, aged 38, of 147 Abbots Road, Abbots Langley, Watford, Herts. Despite the fact that Mr. Hills is multiply handicapped with poor leg and clumsy arm and hand movements, he is deaf and must use a hearing aid, and has poor sight, he has struggled continually, as his sponsor said, "to achieve something worthwhile against odds." His many achievements include a college prize for the most outstanding performance by an evening student on the 'O' level maths course, and becoming a Licentiate of the Institute of Bookkeepers.

Norman Perry, aged 28, of 15 Parkhead Drive, Weston Coyney, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs., who in spite of his severe han-

What's it all about then? three-year-old David seems to be asking little Rachel, aged two. Rachel is one of thousands of children in this country who are spastic. She's lucky. Her handicap is slight, and she is also able to go to a day centre, one of about 30 built by The Spastics Society and its affiliated groups throughout the country. The story of Rachel's day centre appears on pages 6 and 7.



Spastics Week is coming

SPASTICS Week is only a matter of weeks away, and soon teams of volunteers will be knocking on doors up and down the country for one of the most popular fund-raisers, the house-to-house appeal.

The Week will start as it traditionally does with the service of dedication at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, led by the Rev. Austen Williams, on Sunday, April 28. The theme of the Week will be "The Handicapped Adolescent," and to focus attention on their needs, a press conference will be held early in the week. This will highlight the problem that handicapped teenagers have to face on leaving school and entering the highly competitive job market.

Meanwhile, nationwide, a variety of fund-raising efforts will be under way, such as carnivals, fetes and the lucrative door-knock.

One area, the London Region, is starting off at a disadvantage as local elections are scheduled to take place the same time. Canvassers for Spastics Week will have to take their chance knocking on doors along with the political candidates. An important event during the Week will be the prize-giving by Mrs. Mary Wilson, wife of the Labour leader, of the Society's literary contest awards.

Spastics Week closes on Friday, May 3, with a special reception to say thank you to all those who have helped the Society in its work during the year. The reception is being held in the Grocers' Hall which is being lent for the occasion.

A guide to making money during Spastics Week will be issued to local groups by the Society in an effort to make this year's Spastics Week the most successful ever.

Where doctors and engineers share ideas to help handicapped

IT is only a small outfit—a few sheds tacked together and standing in hospital grounds—but what goes on inside spells hope for spastics all over the country.

The Bath Institute of Medical Engineering has been operating from its tiny headquarters at St. Martin's Hospital, Bath, since 1968. When it started it was unique—the first of its kind to marry the two skills of doctoring and engineering for the benefit of the disabled. Now there are others with the same aim.

At the Institute, doctors and engineers can propose projects—in fact anyone can, and the Institute has dealt with more than 150—a shade too many in the opinion of the two top men there, Les Cossins, the Projects Director, and Brian Auty, who is responsible for the technical development of the in-house projects. Such are the demands on the Institute's resources that work is farmed out, as in the case of a new caliper now being developed by the Institute's Research Fellow at Bath University, Peter Seller, and others at the Bath Technical College and the Rolls-Royce Technical College, Bristol. "Students need projects to work on and lecturers come asking what they can do, and we give them what we can't work on. Then we arrange the clinical assessment of the finished work," Brian explained.

He is the only one of the six-man team who has been at the Institute from the start. He began as an engineer with a company of medical engineers which disappeared in a merger, and he was involved in the early days of cardiac pace-makers back in the fifties. Then the Institute came up and he "jumped at the chance."

The Institute moved to the hospital grounds in July, 1969, nine months after it started. Along with the administrative

offices there are just three laboratories. "It's not overlarge," Brian conceded. "In fact, we could do with much larger premises and a team of 20 rather than six to tackle all the work we get."

One of the problems is common to all charities—the lack of money. There is a budget of £63,000 and all the money has to be applied for from charity trusts and the like.

Not all the work undertaken is purely for the disabled, since its brief is in the widest sense of medical engineering. In one laboratory there is work being carried out for anaesthetists.

New ramp

However, even the entrance of the Institute is geared to the handicapped—for leading up to the door is a new ramp which is undergoing its trials. It consists of three-foot modules bolted together and made of glass reinforced plastic with a surface of silicone carbon and diamond dust to ensure its abrasive qualities. Because of its design it can be assembled in any configuration needed, and assembly time is just half an hour. There is an alternative version in expanded metal although that presents a cost problem.

The ramp is a permanent structure and can take the heaviest person in a wheelchair and a pusher.

Such a ramp is an advantage to all those in wheelchairs, but some of the inventions apply to specific disabilities, especially those of cere-

bral palsy and spina bifida.

There is a leaning board now being tested by the children of the Bath and District Spastic group's nursery, and a highly sophisticated push chair. It is a Rolls-Royce among push chairs. For the spastic child it is a go-anywhere, do anything, luxuriously comfortable mode of travel.

Headache

For the Institute it is, at the moment, something of a headache. For having developed the chair, it now has to find someone to manufacture it. The initial price is not encouraging since it could cost around £40, although considering its life expectancy, it would work out at less than £10 per year for each child that used it. However, there are around 4,000 spastic children in the five-eight year old age group for whom it has been designed, although it could be used by those younger, and by spina bifida children. A manufacturer could run off sufficient chairs to meet their needs in well under a month, and most consider it is not worth their while. The Institute has considered turning the chair over to an industrial engineer who could zip-up its appearance to become a trendy luxurious push chair for the able-bodied child, but then that poses the problem of parental prejudice against having equipment designed for the handicapped.

What takes the chair out of the realms of the ordinary and pushes it into the category of a dream chair, is its all-rounder qualities.

As the parents of any wheelchair-bound child know to their cost, emphasised by aching back, weary legs and a shortened temper, the conventional push and wheelchairs are hell to push over anything except the smooth and level. Sandy beaches or shingly ones, rough woodland and bumpy fields become impassable terrain for all except the most determined.

Sadly, it means that in practical terms a spastic child cannot go to the seaside unless Mum, Dad and everyone else makes a special effort.

So the Institute has come up

with the answer. The wheels for a start look as if they should belong to some lunar vehicle trundling round the moon—they are bowl shaped and made of a resilient polyurethane and bounce back with their own in-built springing. The chair itself, upholstered in washable vinyl, is a chair in its own right since it can be detached and used as a television chair. It supports the child in the correct posture, and it has been discovered that many children, unable to sit in ordinary chairs without a harness, can use this one without being strapped in although there is a harness if necessary. The back arm and foot rests are fully adjustable so that the child can lay prone for playing, and the legs have two positions. The chair and the transport, which has a small tray to allow for carrying bags and so on, can be collapsed inside five minutes and stowed in the boot of a Mini.

Still very much in the experimental stage is the powered exo-skeleton, which looks like a cross between a prop from a science-fiction film and a mummified hand from an Egyptian tomb.

Fingers

Brian explained: "With a motor defect say, where people can't open their fingers, the brain impulses are still present in the form of electrical signals. This apparatus picks up those signals and powers the mechanism. The apparatus has special splints with wires running to rings that are slipped over each finger, and will, it is hoped, be worn unobtrusively under clothing. When I think I want to lift a finger the apparatus would enable me to do so—but that is a long way ahead yet."

One lab. houses a Morris estate car—not just for garaging but as the focus of a three-year plan on the disabled driver. The car is equipped to simulate an entire driving sequence for a wide range of experiments all of which will be filmed. A disabled driver sits in the driving seat and controls the car as test situations are flashed on to the screen before him. This monitoring will give data on brake pressures, steering control and var-

Contd. on Page 5



Chair saved spastic after explosion

A 43-YEAR-OLD spastic was trapped for an hour in the wreckage of his home after a massive explosion had destroyed the Birmingham council house which he shared with his mother.

The man, Mr. John Cutler, dropped through the floor of his bedroom into the living room of the house, together with tons of bricks, timber and slates. His life was saved by a strong armchair which took the weight of the rubble.

Afterwards he was said to be "seriously ill" in hospital.

Officials of the West Midland Gas Board were reported to be carrying out investigations into the cause of the explosion.

Robert Kirby, nine, of Orpington, Kent, is a great football fan. But he has never been able to see West Ham, his favourite team, in action because he is confined to a wheelchair and unable to attend matches.

So it was a wonderful surprise when he won a competition run by Nabisco Foods Ltd. of Welwyn Garden City, the makers of Shredded Wheat cereal.

Robert's prize was to spend a morning, along with 19 other winners, at the West Ham Club ground, watching the players train. They also collected photographs and autographs from members of the team.

Picture shows Robert with West Ham players, left to right, Mervyn Day, Tommy Taylor and Trevor Brooking.

Touching letter from Cardiff youngsters

MEMBERS of the Cardiff and District Spastics Association were very touched to receive the following letter, enclosing £1.50.

Dear Mrs. Cottle,

My friends, Rachel, Louise, Miles, Nicola Celnuk and I, performed a play called *Christmas Magic* last Saturday, after many practices.

We really enjoyed performing it, and many people helped us such a lot.

A lady, Mrs. Panton, made a Santa Claus costume for us, and my friend, Victoria Davis, lent us her two ballet dresses.

We hope you will enjoy spending the money on something useful. We all send our best wishes for a happy New Year to you and your family and all the children in the day centre.

With love from
Sian, Rachel, Louise, Nicola
(and Jo who helped us).

A SPONSORED swim held at Maidstone, Kent, is expected to have brought in more than £400. This will go into a fund for building a short-term residential centre for spastics in South-East England.



Children at the Bath and District Spastics Society's children's centre have been enthusiastically test-running the multi-purpose chair and the leaning board. Of course, you can just sit in the chair and have a friend push it, or you can really get down to working on a jigsaw. On the other hand, the leaning board can give you the chance of tackling it at a different angle.



THE Government's Butter Token Scheme, introduced last July, will be continued until December 1974.

The tokens are available to anybody receiving supplementary benefits, and details can be obtained from local branches of the Department of Health and Local Security.

Richard Burton is sponsoring an appeal fund for a new holiday centre for the disabled. It is to be built at Porthcawl and will take 30 people, individually and in family units. Richard Burton is to give a sizeable grant to the Welsh Council for the Disabled so that they can start building the hotel, which will have his name.

Scottish exhibition

A N exhibition on Equipment for Disabled People—Life, Work and Leisure, has been organised by the Scottish Information Service for the Disabled. It will take place from the 4th-22nd March, 1974, at the Scottish Hospital Centre, Crewe Road, Edinburgh EH4 2LF. (Tel. 031 332 2335).

Visitors are welcome between 10.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday. Group visits by prior arrangement.

Splashes from the Spastics Pool

THE decision to extend the Blackpool incentive scheme until February 23rd, 1974, was in response to the many enquiries received by George Abbott, organiser of the Collectors Club. Although many hundreds of collectors have already qualified

for a week at Pontin's Holiday Centre in Blackpool next May by increasing their membership totals by 50, quite a number feel that the present difficulties resulting from the three-day week will have an adverse effect on their efforts to achieve the

target. Also many collectors have set their sights even higher to enable their families to join them on holiday or to assist with travelling arrangements. George Abbott was quick to respond to this appeal, with the result that those collectors who have been steadily increasing their membership since September will not be disappointed.



Clive Sullivan, Rugby League Captain of Hull and Great Britain handing out car keys left and right. The recipients, Mr. B. N. Summer and Mr. D. Gill who both qualified for first prizes in the Charm Girl Competition for Spastics Pool supporters.

Customers gave stamps to Chairmobile fund

BRENDA Howlett and Keith Guyatt, employees of the Society's Chingford Work Centre, have been presented with Chairmobiles by courtesy of the staff at Green Shield Stamps of Leyton, East London.

When Purchase Tax was abolished last April, some of the items available from the Green Shield catalogue went down in price, and people who went to exchange their books for these goods often found that they had stamps left over. Staff at the Leyton gift shop persuaded many customers to put their surplus stamps into a charity fund.

Before long they had collected enough to buy three Chairmobiles, the electric wheelchair designed by Lord Snowdon.

Their choice

Having bought the chairs, the gift shop ladies then had to find some disabled people who would benefit from them. They consulted the yellow pages of the telephone directory and found that there was a spastics work centre at nearby Chingford.

The chairs were handed over by actor Jack Watling during a special ceremony at the Leyton Green Shield Gift Shop.

Picture shows, front row, left to right: Keith Guyatt, from Chingford Work Centre; Jamie House, a handicapped child to whom a chair was also given.

and Brenda Howlett, also from the Chingford Work Centre. Back row: Mrs. Jaggs and Mrs. Couldry, who collected the stamps to buy the Chairmobile, and Caren O'Connor, Public Relations Officer of Green Shield Stamps.

MOST package-deal holiday-makers on the Continent are covered for possible medical expenses by the travel firms' own insurance schemes. But this money can usually be claimed only after the holiday is over. Now, prospective visitors to the Common Market countries can obtain a form from the Ministry of Health and Social Security which will enable them to claim a refund of at least part of the cost of medical treatment while actually abroad.

CREWE and District Spastics Society has been given a Chairmobile by an anonymous donor.

The battery-operated wheelchair, costing about £190, arrived quite out of the blue at the group's work centre.

The chair will enable some of the disabled workers to get around the centre more easily.

A coffee evening organised by Miss Celia Prophett of Fenton, Staffordshire, raised £350 towards the North Staffordshire Spastics Association's £40,000 new centre building fund.



"I always thought I would win one day", remarked Lorna Wilton of Portishead, Somerset when she received a cheque for £1,998 from John Pritchard, Public Relations Officer, Top Ten Promotions. Our picture also shows collectors Mrs. Stonestreet, Mrs. M. Kenhard and Mrs. I. House. Mrs. House, who is Miss Wilton's official collector received a bonus cheque for £99.



Each week three million weekly bulletins are despatched by company vehicles, rail, and in some cases by sea and air. Add to this gift invitations, notifications to winners and general correspondence and one is faced with a mountain of mail.

Our picture shows the company loading bay early on Tuesday morning before the despatch of the weekly bulletins.

Boppo calling



BOPPO the Bear, whose book helps raise funds for spastics, has asked us to pass on this message to all local groups:

If you are planning any major fund-raising event during this year, it might be possible for me to make a personal appearance — perhaps lead a sponsored walk, autograph my Boppo books, give out certificates or prizes, etc., and tell children all about the Boppo Club.

Do drop me a line and tell me about your plans — I'd like to help, and will where I can. You can get me at Boppo's Club, Westmorland House, 104 Stokes Croft, Bristol BS9 7QX. Tell the children to watch for the Boppo Newsletter that appears in T.V. Comic every week.

Making new friends at Fernwood

TRAINEES at the Fernwood Work Centre, run by the Wolverhampton and District Spastics Society, are furthering the integration process by mixing with able-bodied students at the local college of Further Education.

Early last year, groups of students and staff from the college began visiting Fernwood to give occasional film shows and a joint excursion to the Midland Safari Park was arranged.

Now the disabled and able-bodied young people have combined once again in attending a series of Wednesday afternoon lectures on general topics at the college.

These lectures are part of the regular college syllabus and all students are required to attend as an enlargement of their special courses. This year the Fernwood trainees were also invited to join in.

Subjects covered include Other People's Faiths, The Way West, Popular Images, and Car Maintenance.

The benefits of this scheme are two-fold. The students are becoming accustomed to seeing disabled people around, while the Fernwood trainees feel that they are being accepted on an equal footing.

A man of courage tells why he admires spastics

THE panel of judges for this year's Spastics Society Achievement Award once again included Sir Geoffrey Jackson, recently retired from the Diplomatic Corps.

He is well qualified for this task, as his own courage and tenacity under duress gained him a knighthood and turned him into one of the heroes of modern times.

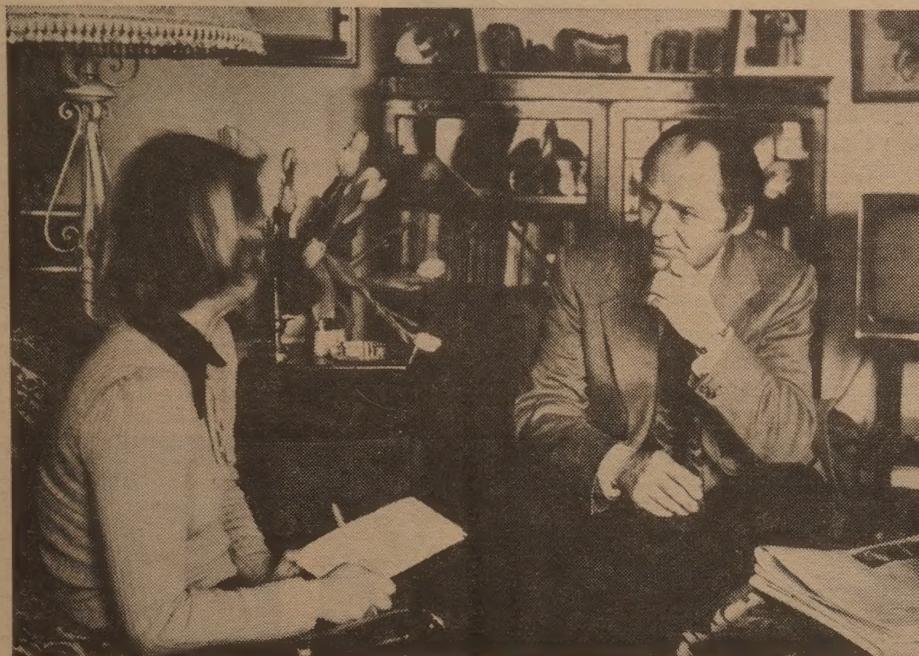
Three years ago, as British Ambassador to Uruguay in South America, he was kidnapped by Tupamaros, the local variety of urban guerrillas. He was held captive in very primitive conditions for eight months. During most of this time no news of him filtered through to the outside world.

Kept fit

Despite being cooped up in a tiny underground "cage," he kept himself fit by a system of physical exercises. With true North Country tenacity, he also devised a means of keeping track of the calendar, although at first his captors tried to confuse his time sense by serving meals at irregular intervals. On his release he found he was only 36 hours out in his calculations.

Throughout his long ordeal he was sustained by his deep religious faith and as a widely-educated man (with a good Cambridge degree in Modern Languages), he had considerable intellectual reserves to draw upon.

To help pass the time in prison, he started to write children's stories. Although these manuscripts were taken away by his guards, he was able to write the stories out from memory after his release and they were subsequently published in book form. Sir Geoffrey says that he developed phenomenal powers of memory while in captivity, but



this extreme acuteness of recall is slowly beginning to fade.

However, one more fortunate legacy of his ordeal, which still remains, is a heightened awareness of things around him.

"When I'm walking down the street now, I notice all sorts of details that other people miss," he told me. "My wife finds it quite amusing."

His prison guards, although changed frequently, were always masked and he learned to recognise them by their eyes. Three years later he can still read occasional signs of violence in people's eyes.

"But most faces are beautiful to me now," he said.

Pathetic

Sir Geoffrey remains remarkably unembittered by his experiences. In "People's Prison," his book about the kidnapping, he manages to write with humour and at times with affection about his youthful captors with their pathetic half-digested theories of Marxist-Leninism.

When I commented on this amazing lack of bitterness towards his jailers, he pointed out that one can hate the motivation behind this kind of terrorist activity without necessarily hating the instruments through which it is carried out.

Making a distinction between hatred and anger, he said: "I felt angry then, and still do when I think of the suffering they caused my wife."

This, he added, was the worst aspect of his captivity — the knowledge that his wife had no means of finding out whether he was still alive.

The kidnapping took place on the other side of the world, and a few years ago one might have commented smugly: "Of course, it couldn't happen in Britain." But, ironically, little more than 12 hours before this interview took place, three bombs had exploded within a mile of Sir Geoffrey's London flat.

Fortunately, nobody had been hurt, but it was a nasty reminder that terrorism continues its destructive course uncomfortably near home.

Sir Geoffrey feels that there is a great deal of bitterness in modern life and that far too many people waste their time being bitter about trivialities when they could be enjoying life.

"I think that spastics can give the rest of us a salutary example here," he said.

When invited to judge the Society's first Achievement Award, he was greatly impressed by the happiness most spastics achieve just from trying to lead as normal a life as possible.

Real people

His interest in disabled people first arose many years ago when his son (now aged 30, with a career in banking), had a school friend who was a spastic. Sir Geoffrey says that he greatly admired this independent little boy, who made him see that spastics were not abnormal beings but very real people.

This led him to take an interest in the welfare of disabled people in various parts of the world where he has lived. His diplomatic career has taken him to many underdeveloped countries where, he says, the disabled tend to be badly treated and often cruelly exploited.

Sir Geoffrey has always believed in the dignity of the individual, and during his captivity the stupendous importance of the personality was brought home to him even more forcibly. He admires The Spastics Society's efforts at restoring a full measure of human dignity to the individual disabled person.

Severely handicapped spastics, entrapped in their ungainly bodies, must carry their prisons around with

Anne Plummer of Spastics News, interviews Sir Geoffrey at his home.

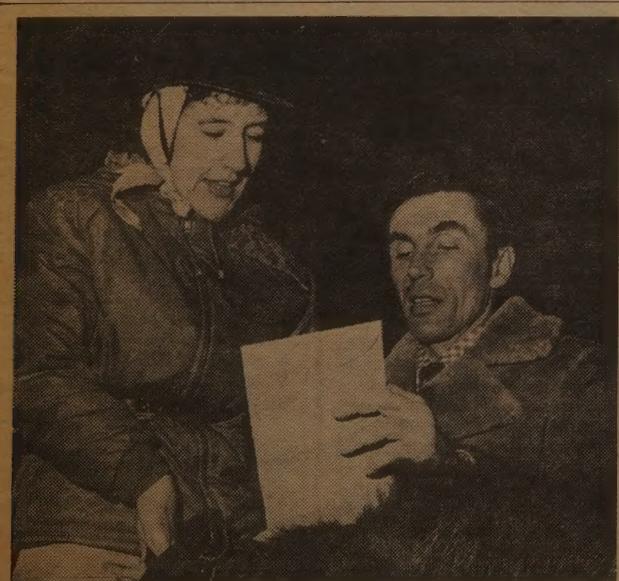
them all the time, he says, but manage to defeat these physical limitations every day of their lives.

In his memorable address at the Spastics Week church service last year, Sir Geoffrey said of the nominees for the Achievement Award:

"I had seen suffering before, and I had seen courage before. But never had I seen so much collective and concentrated suffering. And never had I seen so straight and firm a collective back turned on it."

"From such a man as Sir Geoffrey Jackson, this was praise indeed."

Anne Plummer



Elaine Russon, 18, a member of the Smiling Faces Club, run by the Wolverhampton and District Spastics Society, receives the third prize she won in an essay competition organised by the Riding for the Disabled Association.

The prize is being handed over by show jumping champion Paddy McMahon, rider of the famous Penwood Forge Mill.

Picture by courtesy of Express and Star, Wolverhampton

Joyce is on the fund-raising snooker circuit

MALE snooker enthusiasts have the chance to give mere woman "a break" when they watch Joyce Gardner, Ladies' World Snooker Champion, playing a series of exhibition matches in aid of spastics this month. Miss Gardner opened her current Yorkshire tour on Monday, February 4th, at Batley.

Joyce is one of The Spastics Society's most ardent fund-raisers and during the last 14 years has raised thousands of pounds for the handicapped in this way.

As the only woman professional playing full time, and winner of the women's world title seven times, Joyce will be joined in most of her matches by two men worthy of her mettle — John Dunning, 11 times Yorkshire amateur champion, and John Pulman, 10 times world snooker champion and finalist in the 1973 world open snooker championship.

Despite the fact that she is a lone woman in what is very much a man's world, Joyce is no ardent supporter of Women's Lib. "Men are better players," she admits. "They are physically stronger, which is what counts."

Red-haired and attractive, she always makes sure that she looks feminine in a carefully chosen dress when she plays her matches.

After each exhibition Joyce will hold a lively auction in aid of spastics, which will include her cue and equipment.



A happy engagement day picture of Pauline Milne of Basingstoke, and Derek Chalkley of Egham, Surrey.

The couple first met two years ago on a Spastics Society holiday in Calella, Spain. Pauline and her identical twin sister Sandra are founder members of the Basingstoke '62 Club, which organised the engagement party where this picture was taken.

This party was also the first occasion on which the two sets of parents had met each other.

A London Tourist Centre for the Disabled is an idea being explored by the Central and Metropolitan Hotels Ltd. group with the Central Council for the Disabled.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE vagaries of the postal system have contrived to render havoc to announcements concerning this year's Oxford Seminar: some people have received dual notification, whilst others have been forced to the conclusion that there is to be no seminar this year.

This letter is, therefore, to inform everyone that the 1974 International Seminar is alive and well and will take place at University College, Oxford, from April 16th-20th. The meeting is being organised by the International Cerebral Palsy Society and is entitled "The Handicapped Adolescent."

Subjects to be discussed include: the problems of growing up in the 1970's, leisure for the handicapped, the problems of drug taking amongst adolescents, sexuality, being coloured in the East End of London, authority and the spastic, work and disability, training of the mentally handicapped adolescent, teaching the mentally handicapped adolescent to express himself with or without speech, vocational training,

the unemployed, and family planning. Speakers so far come from France, Israel, Czechoslovakia, Ireland, the U.S.A., Denmark, Sweden, Scotland and England.

Plans are still available at this meeting and anybody interested should apply to me at the address below.

Three bursaries for handicapped people are available. Care staff will be available at the meeting, so degree of handicap is no barrier. Again, applications for a bursary should be sent to me.

Mrs. Anita Loring,
Seminar Director, ICPS,
20-22 Mortimer Street,
London W.1.

IN thanking you for the kind remarks about me in the December issue of Spastics News, may I assure your readers that I am still at Nottingham University and not at Birmingham, as your article suggested. Moreover, I am likely to stay at Nottingham for the foreseeable future, and '62 Club members can, as in the past, contact me c/o Geology

Dept., Nottingham University, or at my home address.

Your mention of Birmingham doubtless puzzled many '62 members, particularly since there has never been a '62 club in the Birmingham conurbation — indeed, in the whole history of the '62 Club movement only one club has ever been formed in the West Midlands compared with five in the East Midlands. I've often wondered why '62 clubs are so unevenly distributed. Could it be that there are clubs in areas without '62 Clubs which serve the same function, or is it that no handicapped persons have had the courage to form a truly "do-it-yourself" club?

If clubs run on '62 Club lines exist, we should like to hear from them if only to exchange ideas about mutual problems. Alternatively, if any spastic person is interested in starting a club or wishes to become involved in the '62 Club way of life, I and the Clubs' officers will be only too pleased to help.

Ron Firman,
President of the
Association of '62 Clubs,
67 Grove Avenue,
Chilwell,
Beeston,
Nottingham, NG9 4DX.

Sardinian spastics need more than the sunshine

FOUR years ago, on a winter's morning, Janet Smith left home in Bath, Somerset, her Fiat 500 loaded with luggage and textbooks, and set off for Sardinia.

With her was her friend and colleague, Lydia Wheeler, with whom she was to found the first professional working system of occupational therapy on the Mediterranean island. It would be a total break from hospital routine at Bath's Royal United. Spastic children were the only link.

In England, early diagnosis and prompt and efficient treatment has given the country a reputation for an enlightened approach to the care of the cerebral palsied. In Sardinia, spastic children sit listlessly for hours in ill-fitting wheelchairs with little or nothing to do.

Wild terrain

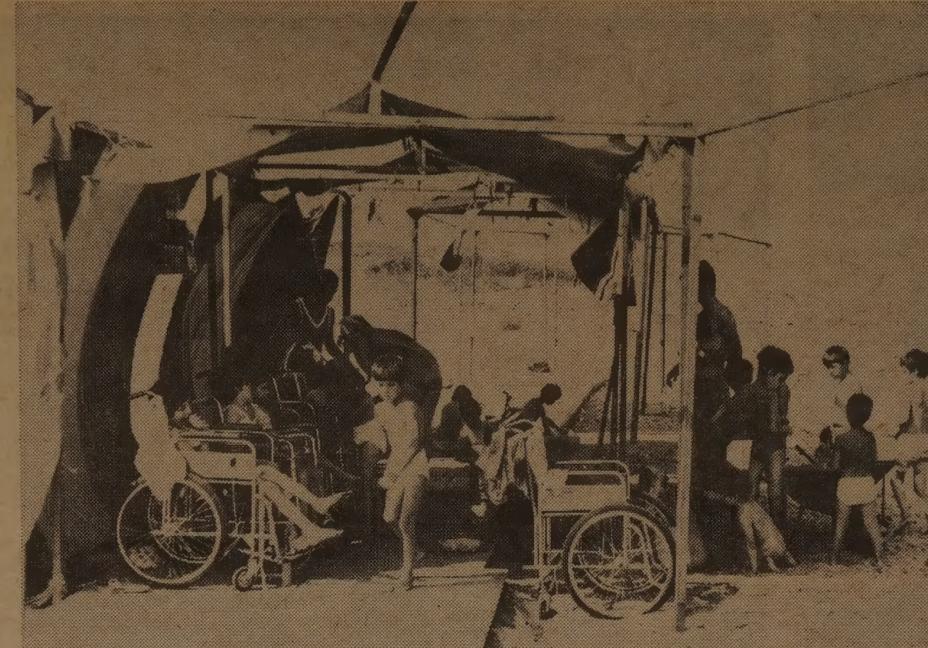
The island has the highest rate of spasticity in Europe, primarily as the result of unattended home confinements. If the infant develops a fever after a difficult delivery, medical help is either not called or is so remote on this wild terrain so as to make the journey useless.

When the damage caused by the meningitis, or whatever, shows up later, lots of parents view the tragedy as the will of God. They feel it's a disgrace to have a handicapped child and tend to treat him with less love than their other offspring.

If they're lucky they can dump him in hospital and forget about him.

But at the hospital in Sardinia, at which 29-year-old Janet Smith now works, there is a long, long waiting list. And there seems to be a growing social conscience, Janet has noticed recently. Mothers and fathers visit their handicapped children more frequently and are anxious to discuss the future.

Janet struggles on virtually alone in her own department,



Makeshift awning on the local beach during a day out for the spastic children of San Camillo Hospital at Sassari.

now that Lydia has left the hospital. At a spastics centre 100 miles away on the other side of the island, an Italian occupational therapist is trying to meet the needs of the disabled in her area.

Physiotherapy is much more strongly represented. Yet practitioners are mostly imported because mainland professionals prefer to work in Italy nearer their families.

Enthusiasm

"When we first arrived," said Janet, "having been invited there after our initial suggestion, from England to do O.T. work, we were greeted with great enthusiasm. We learned to speak Italian, even to communicate a bit in some of the dialects."

"For some months we were given all the equipment we asked for—such as specially fitted chairs and wheelchairs for the children's comfort. We had Galt toys shipped in, and painted our department's furniture to look cheerful.

"The children had never in their lives before spent one hour completely filled with constructive activity. They really looked forward to our sessions together, both of us noticing an enormous jump in morale.

"Matching up shapes and forms gave the spastics something they could become absorbed in, and set them on the path for learning.

"But after that first half-year, I think the novelty—as indeed we were to the administration—wore off. Our requests for play materials and so on tended to go by the board," said Janet.

Not that they were criticised or told they weren't giving value for money. It just seemed that the priests who ran the hospital lacked foresight.

"On first view, such-and-such might look a splendid idea, then funds run lower than expected and projects are left in mid-air in favour, ironically, of some new scheme they've heard about. I won't deny that it hasn't been very frustrating



Two young patients at San Camillo Hospital learn to identify shapes with Janet. Rita, aged seven, left, is a deaf athetoid; Christine, five, able to hear, but also an athetoid.

at times. I love the work and, of course, the patients, so I've never regretted the move to Sardinia. Though it is an upward climb," she admits.

But life in Sardinia is unquestionably changing.

"Four years ago people were shocked that Lydia and I had left our homes and got away from the strict eye of parental influence (or so they assumed) ... our mini-skirts horrified them."

Yet today girls move about freely, without chaperons.

Not long ago Janet, now married to a Sardinian architect and with a daughter, took some of her little patients out of the hospital on the outskirts of the town into the major streets of Sassari to look at the shops.

Article reproduced by courtesy of the author and the Daily Telegraph.

Passers-by "crossed" themselves as a protection against the evil contamination of seeing a crippled child; they looked angrily at Janet and her helpers for the "cruelty" in urging the children to try to walk.

"The moment the day comes when that kind of scene no longer happens, I shall feel we really have made some headway," she said.

Rosemary March

THE Society's adult residential centre at Buxton in Derbyshire now has its own specially-adapted coach.

It was presented by the Friends of Buxton Spastics organisation who took three years to raise the money.

Some of the centre's residents helped to pay for the coach themselves by taking part in sponsored walks.

How the State can help with work problems

Did you know that severely disabled people in open employment can obtain State aid with travelling costs to and from work? Those who have to use taxis, for example, because the severity of their handicap prevents them using public transport, could benefit from this scheme.

This and much more useful information is given in two leaflets published by the Department of Employment called "The Way Back" and "The Patient (sic) with Work Problems." Despite the unfortunate wording of the latter title both leaflets provide some helpful advice for the disabled.

As well as financial assistance with travel, various mechanical aids to employment can also be supplied by the DOE on permanent loan in cases where this will improve somebody's chance of finding and holding down the right job. Such aids include Braille micrometers, adapted typewriters, special chairs, sewing machines, etc. This equipment will also be provided so that people can carry out work in their own homes.

Grants

When all other possibilities of resettlement by the DOE have failed, grants may be made to enable severely disabled people to set up in business on their own account.

Information on these facilities can be obtained from local employment offices. Each office keeps a register of disabled people in the area. Registration is voluntary and some disabled people prefer not to register.

However, registration may help the local Disabled Settlement Officer to find his clients suitable jobs, since larger employers have an obligation to give employment to registered disabled people as far as possible. Certain facilities available to severely disabled people—in particular sheltered employment—are limited to those who are registered.

DROs are people specially

Special coach for Buxton

trained to help the disabled. Their concern is both to find clients the right job and to ensure that they make the best use of the services available.

The DRO may recommend attendance at an Industrial Rehabilitation Unit, where courses usually last about six or eight weeks, sometimes longer. Here, disabled people work in a realistic industrial environment, and are assessed in a variety of jobs in order to find out what type of employment would be most suited to their capabilities.

During their attendance at the unit, disabled people are paid special tax-free allowances with, if appropriate, earnings related supplement. Free meals and assistance with fares are also given.

These concessions are also available to those who attend a training course at one of the Government Training Centres in different parts of the country.

Both leaflets are obtainable from HM Stationery Office.

Martin plants birthday tree



A willow tree has been planted at the Preston Spastics Centre, Lancashire, to mark the 21st Anniversary of both The Spastics Society and Preston and District Spastics Group.

The tree was given by Mr. Thomas Robinson, Chairman of Chorley Support Group, who has raised several hundred pounds for the Preston Centre during the past three years.

Mr. Robinson is pictured, right, helping his spastic son Martin to plant the tree.

Martin's own birthday also coincided with the ceremony.

Picture by courtesy of Lancashire Evening Post

A 23rd Anniversary Dance was held by the North London Spastics Association at Alexandra Palace recently. The event helped to publicise the group's projected new £150,000 work centre for spastics in the area. So far, about £10,000 has been raised towards the centre.

Where doctors and engineers combine

Contd. from Page 2

ious responses to visual stimuli. Not far from the humble quarters of the Institute, another project is being developed at the imposing (and so new that it is still being built) University of Bath.

The School of Material Science, itself a rather small unit, under Professor Totte is doing valuable research work, and the Institute has its own Research Fellow, Peter Seller, working on a new caliper.

Calipers will never be attrac-

tive and elegant, but they can change, and Peter Seller is doing his best. He took a look at the caliper and found that in 100 years the only thing that has changed was the quality. "They're badly made these days," said Peter.

His re-think of the old, cumbersome contraption has altered everything except the clumsy and ugly orthopaedic shoes.

"The man this particular caliper has been designed for says the appearance of the boot is the least of his problems. He wants a caliper that is lighter, doesn't chafe, and

can be relied on not to collapse!"

So Peter has reduced the weight — calipers can weigh anything from five to seven pounds, replaced the chafing leather and built in a collapse-proof hinge.

"Instead of the conventional metal strut supports, I have used flattened tubular stainless steel. This gives lightness. Then I looked at the leather straps. Leather was used because it is compatible with people, being an animal product, but it is heavy and can make people sweat. If the thigh cuff gives too much support,

then pressure sores erupt."

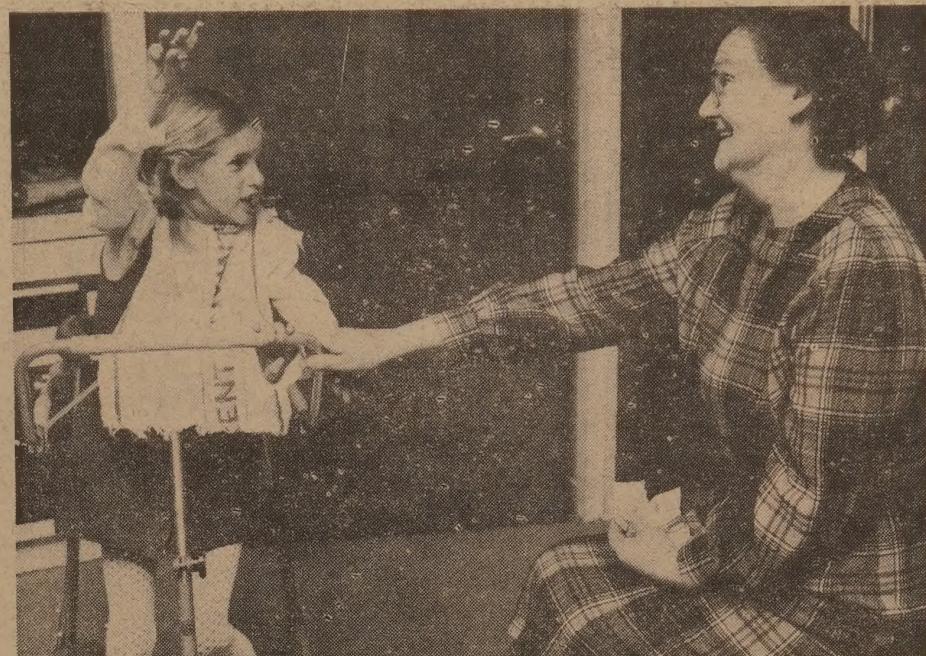
His chosen material is a fibre glass shell covered by velvetex, unexpanded polyethylene, at the moment. It is nice and spongy and feels very comfortable. The heel hinge has been re-designed so that it cannot be released accidentally, and the hinges at the knee have been re-shaped and re-styled.

He has been working on it for a year, and Peter sees another year of tests ahead. This particular caliper has been designed for a polio victim. "We started off with someone with just the one dis-

ability, then having developed the caliper, we can look at those with more complicated needs, like those of the spastic and the spina bifida victim."

As long as there are people there will be the disabled, whether through an accident of birth or an accident later in life. However, the developments at the Bath Institute, and medical engineering units like it, will enable the handicapped to make their own way through life with the maximum of independence.

Liz Cook



LEFT: Ian was a normal, healthy baby, until illness left him blind and very handicapped. Here his mother helps him to respond by touch to the world around him that he cannot see.

ABOVE: Old friends—Jenny, aged seven, and Miss Mason, who has been coming to help at the Centre since it opened. Now she "wouldn't leave the children for anything." The Centre was originally opened by the Medway Towns and District Spastics Group and is now rented from them by the Gillingham Health Department. It takes nearly 40 children, about half of whom are spastic.

Where children are helped and mothers share difficulties

IAN was a normal healthy baby at birth, full of life and flourishing. Then at six months he fell critically ill. For months a desperate fight was carried out for his life. Ian's mother said: "I was so thankful that he was alive. I never thought of the consequences of having a handicapped child."

For Ian was left multiply handicapped and totally blind. He had suffered a subdural haematoma and hydrocephalus followed the operation.

He is now five, and for the last year has been attending the Special Care Clinic run by Gillingham Health Department at the Medway Towns and District Spastics Group's Centre.

Recalling the dark days following Ian's illness, his mother recalled how she felt: "Despairing. But he is our one and only child. It was just natural instinct wanting to care for him because he was mine."

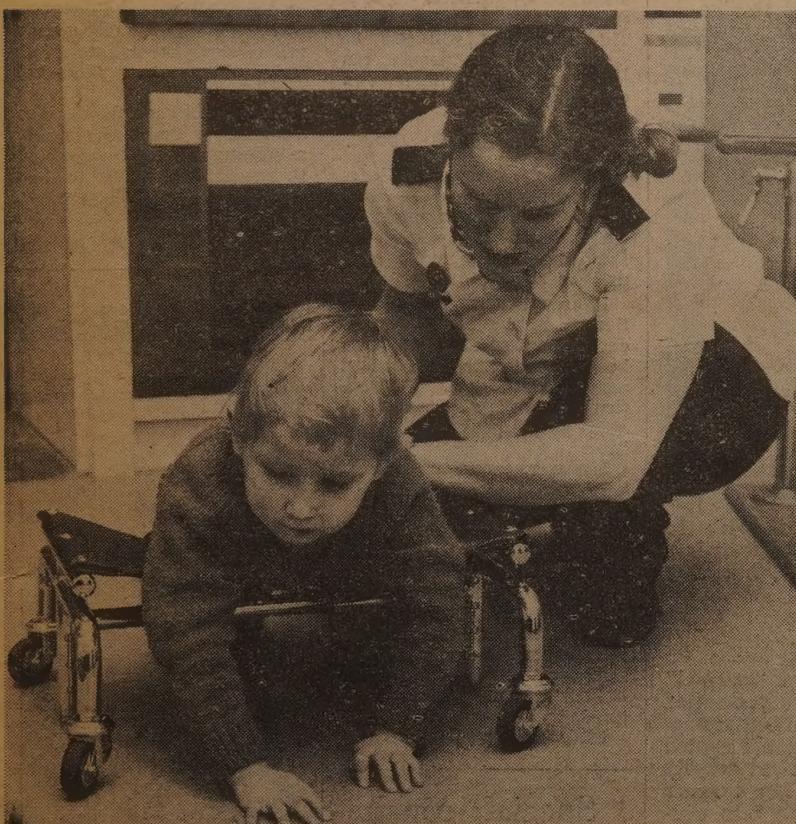
"It occurred to me when I was pregnant that I was just as likely as anyone

else to have a handicapped child, but when he was born all he had was a slightly dislocated hip — apart from that he was developing normally. I don't feel bitter that this should have happened to him, but I did despair that I would ever get through to people for help."

"It affected our family life for a time because my husband's work takes him away a lot, and he went leaving a normal baby, and came back to a handicapped one."

"Now we're as close as ever, and I'd like another baby—but at the moment Ian is a full-time job. I have to carry him and he is quite heavy now. I have to take him everywhere with me, and shopping's no fun for me weighed down with a shopping basket and a Major Buggy. Ian loves it all, but the trouble is that though people in shops realise he must be disabled because he's in a wheelchair, they don't realise that he's blind. They're careless with their shopping baskets and he's always getting caught in the face with them. Or else his arms and legs fly out, catch their baskets and clothing, and they think he's doing it deliberately. They see that he's handicapped but think he should be told to 'stop it'."

Ian travels to the Medway Centre twice a week—a long haul since he lives at Sheerness, some 25 miles away. His



ABOVE: Andrew, aged three, practises the crawl to give his muscles much-needed exercise, with the aid of physiotherapist Wendy Mills. BELOW: Mrs. Jean Goddard, right, had been a teacher for the mentally handicapped when she took over the running of the Centre. Here she helps spastics Andrew and Rachel in their pastry play, while Molly Jeffries aids David



mother used to take him on the train until he got too big to manage. During the ambulance men's dispute he travelled in a taxi paid by the Kent Association for the Blind.

Says his mother: "I can see an immense improvement since he started coming. He was stubborn with his arm and wouldn't use it—now he uses his left hand. He makes a lot more sound instead of just 'mmmmmm' all the time."

A lot of the credit goes to his home tutor, who is making him more aware of his surroundings, but the Spastic Centre also plays a big part, for Ian's parents moved in order to get their own house, but made sure that they stayed close enough for Ian to still attend the Centre.

Increase

The Centre was opened by Derek Nimmo, member of the Stars Organisation for Spastics, in July 1969, and has 37 children on its register, nearly half of whom are spastics. If the Medway Group could only find the money they could buy a second mini-bus and then even more children could be catered for. The custom-built Centre is rented by the local health authority and it takes children who are handicapped by spina bifida, mental retardation, deafness, as well as cerebral palsy.

They don't just come to play—in fact, some of them need

to be taught to play. They also have physiotherapy and speech therapy—both vital for spastics—occupational therapy, and visits from a doctor.

The Centre is run by Jean Goddard, who came in April 1970 because: "They wrote and asked me to." Originally she taught the mentally handicapped, but her own school was moving too far away for her to continue, at the time the Centre opened, and so she joined. "They're all children to me—it doesn't make any difference to me whatever their handicap. And I think that it's a good thing that they're all mixed up here."

Support

She is not just a fully trained supervisor with vast experience of handicapped children—she is also a shoulder to cry on.

"The mothers have all got different problems even though they share the basic one of having a handicapped child. I try to get them together as much as possible because one may have had—and solved—a problem that is worrying another mum now. And they were wonderful in helping to raise money for the bus."

Mothers are helped by coming here and they can ring if they are just fed up and need someone to talk to."

If she has one complaint it is that not enough is done—especially for children like Jenny. "You see, Jenny is severely handicapped—she can't walk, she can't talk, and there's nowhere for her to go. She's seven and she's still coming here. I've got one girl



ABOVE: Me and my mate. Here Matthew, a newcomer to the Centre, shares a bag of crisps with Andrew. The Centre takes children with a wide variety of handicaps, ranging from spastic cerebral palsy to those who have suffered a "bad start" in life and



ABOVE: Little Rachel is a spastic, but very lightly handicapped. And like every little two-year-old girl, she loves to play at being Mum.



ABOVE: Pam Green and Dorothy Carr with the new mini-bus. When it's not collecting children it's used for collecting jumble for further fund-raising. With another bus, more spastic children could attend the centre.

fully trained first experience of children—she has to cry on. I have fallen and got even though basic one of a pediculicidal. I am together as because one and solved—a s—worrying. And they are helping to the bus. I helped by and they can just fed up to talk to." complaint it is done— children like a, Jenny is stopped—she can't talk, and her to go. She's still com- got one girl

Contd. on Page 8



ABOVE: Literally learning to stand on his own two feet is Andrew. The Special Care Clinic takes him from spasticity, blindness, deafness, mental retardation and need help catching up.



ABOVE: Going home at 12.30 and the children are helped into their specially fitted seats at the start of the 30-mile journey. RIGHT: the caring may cost money, but the love costs nothing. Sue helps Paul, with his milk!



ABOVE: Paul is a heavily handicapped spastic, and here Wendy eases his arm in the passive movement routine to stretch out the joints and remove spasm from the muscles. It is the type of treatment a mother can do at home to help her child.



ABOVE: The golden moments of childhood. Rachel and David are blissfully caught up in the magic world of make-believe as they concentrate on the serious business of playing in the sand tray.



ABOVE: Literally learning to stand on his own two feet is Ian, who at five years of age cannot yet support his own weight. Steadily he is improving with specialist help such as physiotherapy with Wendy, to back up his mother's efforts at home.



ABOVE: Children at the Special Care Clinic may not rush around like children at other nurseries, but they still love listening to music as they are shown here. BELOW: Wendy encourages Andrew to try walking, his steps guided by the frame.



BITS AND PIECES

by The Collector

PUPILS of the Bluecoat

School, Oldham, Lancashire, have bought three special feeding chairs for children at the local Heathbank Spastics Centre.

The schoolgirls collected the money at a variety of events, including dances, raffles, a sponsored swim, a parents' evening, and donations.

A sponsored "fish-in" by the Castle Angling Club of Northampton has raised £120 for Northampton and District Spastics Association. Some of the anglers taking part in this marathon effort fished for 48 hours.

AN ingenious device from the Post Office could prove a boon for those spastics with poor hand control who have difficulty using the phone.

The card Callmaker — there is a tape version, too — stores telephone numbers on cards. To make a call the appropriate card is simply dropped into the Callmaker, a neat piece of equipment half the size of the telephone, and the number is dialled automatically.

A box of 50 cards, index dividers and a punching kit, are included in the price which is £3.50 per quarter plus a £3 connection charge.

WEST Bromwich and District Spastics Society has received over £500 from various sources over the past few weeks.

These included a variety show, a raffle and donations from local firms.

Four unclaimed ponies from the recent Whitechurch Common pony drive meant money for The Spastics Society, for they were auctioned at Tavistock and the Society was one of three charities to benefit from the £143.84 raised.



High note of fund raising

A Midlands pop group, the Hy-Kells, has raised £4,500 for charity over the last five years by making collections at dances.

They have bought a kidney machine for a hospital, television sets for old people, and a mini-bus for epileptics.

Their most recent gifts were electric wheelchairs to Carlson House School for Spastics in Birmingham and to the Tamworth Spastics Centre.

The group is pictured with one of the chairs. They are, standing (left to right): Paul Sale, drummer; Barry Hyett, lead guitarist; Peter Kelsall, vocalist and compere; Richard McDonald, bass guitarist; and Paul Kelsall, who plays rhythm guitar. Foreground is Barry's wife, Amanda, a keen collector for charity.

Picture by courtesy of Sunday Mercury

Holidays for young people

THE Inter-School Christian Fellowship is arranging two holiday retreats for young people between the ages of 16 and 19, some of whom will be physically handicapped.

Each day starts off with informal prayers or discussions on the Christian faith and its application to everyday life. The programme is varied with games, outings to places of interest, and sports to suit each individual.

A trained nurse will be in charge of the physical health of the party. The first holiday is at Holybourne, Alton, Hampshire, between July 24-August 1, and costs £10.50. The second is at Seaford, Sussex, from July 28 to August 8, and costs £12.

Application forms can be had from The Activities Secretary, ISCF, 37 Marylebone Lane, London W1M 6AX.



The already beautiful grounds of Jaques Hall, the Society's Residential Centre in Essex, have been further enhanced by a new tree.

The planting came at the end of "Plant a Tree for '73" year and was the idea of Mr. D. Short, Chairman of the Friends of Jaques Hall. The tree itself was presented by The Independent Order of Foresters Court Centurion, and planted by Mrs. Terry Sklar, Director of Capital Wines. Mrs. Sklar has been a long-standing benefactor to the Hall's residents. She and the employees of Capital Wines have provided residents with birthday and Christmas gifts,

and a case of wine for Christmas for the last two years.

Members of the Independent Order of Foresters were present for the ceremony and, after meeting the residents, said they would very much like to adopt Jaques Hall as one of their charities for 1974.

In the picture, Ron Clarke, Mrs. Mills, Kenneth Tether-Temple, Mr. Sklar, Mr. Mills, Mrs. Tether-Temple, Mr. J. Mitra, Warden, and Mr. D. Short watch Mrs. Sklar turning her hand to tree planting.

Picture by courtesy of Ray Wood, Harwich, and Dovercourt Standard.

'Geraniums and records preferred to needs of human beings'

SUBNORMALITY Hospitals are being pressed by the Government to make fewer admissions and release patients earlier—but at the same time local authorities are not providing facilities for those patients returning to the community.

This was revealed by James Loring, the Director of The Spastics Society, when he spoke at the official opening of a hostel for former subnormality hospital patients at Kidderminster on January 10.

Talking about the latest cuts in public expenditure, Mr. Loring noted that hospital building and work on community services had already been seriously curtailed. Now £58 million is to be axed from the 1974/5 building estimates of £275 million, and £11 million cut from Social Services expenditure of £75 million.

And this, said Mr. Loring, was a final straw since as far back as last June the Government were seriously limiting loan sanctions for community care projects. These latest cuts, therefore, meant that mentally handicapped people were being cast back on the scrapheap of human care and concern.

Mr. Loring commented: "As at June 1973, eight local authorities in a sample of 140 failed to provide sheltered accommodation, i.e. hostels or similar accommodation whatsoever for the mentally handicapped.

"Whilst all authorities in the sample made some provision for day care for the mentally handicapped, the number of places which were provided was less than 27,000, even though the target for local authorities was 73,500. The Society is deeply concerned that many local authorities have been denied loan sanction for community care projects by the Ministry. It is ironic that these

services, generally considered to be grossly inadequate, should be put in jeopardy by a bureaucratic decision of central government. The amount of money required for the deferred projects is approximately £8 million, and it is tragic that this unfortunate situation is about to be made worse by further cuts and deferrals."

The Kidderminster project was jointly financed by The Spastics Society and the Local

Hospital Board, but unfortunately there are few similar projects in the country.

Mr. Loring added: "Not only is the Government withholding loan sanction, but a great many local authorities prefer geraniums and long playing record libraries to the needs of human beings."

He said The Spastics Society would ask for special assistance for local authorities so that they could meet their urgent needs in the field of mental handicap. And he demanded that the Government should put pressure on local authorities who were failing in their duty even to plan adequate facilities, and ensure that the mentally handicapped, "the most neglected people in the community," did not suffer further from the Social Services expenditure cut back.

Cash goes "on the bottle"

Customers at the Anchor Inn, Salisbury, Wiltshire, probably thought they had taken a drop too much when they saw this giant bottle-shaped cheque behind the bar.

But it was all in a good cause. The "cheque" represented £407.67 collected in whisky bottles by patrons of the Anchor, for Salisbury and District Spastics Association. Group Chairman Mrs. Joyce Smith, left, receives the gift from Mrs. Betty Morris, centre, landlady of the Anchor, while Mrs. Hazel Best looks on.

A raffle held at the pub brought in an additional £85 for spastics.

Picture by courtesy of Salisbury Times



Where children are helped...

Contd. from Page 7

years, and that's what it amounts to."

Mrs. Goddard is helped by a variety of staff—qualified like the physiotherapist Wendy Mills and nursery nurse Sue Campbell, and those who do it for love like Miss Hilda Mason, "the bus ladies" Dorothy Carr and Pam Green, and Molly Jefferies.

"If ever I'm short of a helper on a day when she's not due in, I just send somebody over the green to fetch her. She's always willing to help," Mrs. Goddard said of Miss Mason, who lives nearby.

Miss Mason started coming to the Centre four years ago. "I retired from office work in London and found myself with not much to do. I'd always been interested in handicapped children, so I came here—now I wouldn't leave them for anything. I had a spina bifida god-child and I helped to look after her, so I knew what I was coming to."

Dorothy and Pam have been the "bus ladies" ever since the Centre opened, and when the local authority offered them a job they turned it down, saying they'd rather work for the Society.

Dorothy drives while Pam dashes up to front doors, collects the children and sometimes even dresses them. The bus is virtually new and cost the group £1,300—but a further £100 had to be spent on fitting each seat with a safety belt adjusted to each individual child.

The seats were bought from a well-known chain of child-

care shops—"Not only didn't we get a reduction, although they knew it was for a charity—they insisted we paid cash!"

Mrs. Goddard recalled.

The bus does 60 miles a day and if there was another, more children could be enrolled at the Centre. As it is, a number of children come in by taxi.

Dorothy and Pam have nothing but praise for the new vehicle. "With the old one we used to have to get out and push. You never knew when you started on a journey if you were going to make it—but nothing ever stopped us—not even the weather," said Dorothy. She and Pam became involved through a fellow member of the Red Cross, who brought them along to see the Centre when it opened, and they've been with it ever since.

If a helper's away ill they even stay on to help with the children.

Specialise

Wendy Mills, the physiotherapist, is a relative newcomer to the Centre. She trained at Guy's Hospital, London, spent six months at Medway General Hospital and decided she would like to specialise in working with handicapped children. She moved to the vast, archetypal subnormality hospital, Leybourne Grange, which was once a gracious Kentish mansion. Wendy has been working two days a week at the Centre since October.

Talking of her job, she said: "I certainly don't do it for the money, but I don't do it

through a sense of vocation either. I find it interesting, pleasing, and frustrating. I do my job as anybody else does their job."

She gives the children anything from 20 minutes to half an hour's treatment, depending on their disability and the pressure of time. Some of the treatment such as the routine of passive movement is the kind that any mother could do at home. The limbs are gently massaged to stretch out the joints and remove the spasm from the muscles.

There are approximately 30 day-care Centres belonging to The Spastics Society throughout the country. Their role is one of paramount importance, for early diagnosis and treatment for spastic children has been reiterated publicly at every possible opportunity. Here the Centres play an invaluable role, for not only are the children treated, but their parents can see they are treated. The children are not alone, locked away in a back room as was the case so often a generation or so ago. Their potential, however limited—or great—is assessed and expanded. The pity is that so many children have to wait through lack of places. The Centres are also meeting places for parents who have all had to face the tragedy of having a less than perfect child. Or the mums can stay at home getting on with household tasks that have to take second place to the heavy demands that having a spastic child make on time and strength. As one of the "bus ladies" said: "It gives them that much needed break."



A marathon netball match played by pupils of Appleton Hall Grammar School, near Warrington, Lancashire, has raised £350 towards a swimming pool for the Society's Daresbury Hall adult residential centre.

The 42 girls played netball non-stop for a record-breaking stint of 57 hours, 2 minutes. The achievement has been entered in the Guinness Book of Records.

Picture shows Daresbury Hall Warden, Mr. F. W. Bellman (standing, left), receiving the cheque from Janet Pickering, a sixth-former at Appleton Hall. Also standing are Janet's classmate, Arline Johnson, and their headmaster, Mr. W. D. Power.

Seated (foreground) are Daresbury Hall residents Miss Rose Harwood, Mr. Ronald Angell and Miss Grace Timmins.

Picture by courtesy of Warrington Guardian



Can we help with your problems?

EVERY month I will be writing a regular feature in Spastics News on aids and equipment for the disabled. For several months last year I was travelling around the North Midlands as the Occupational Therapist on The Spastics Society's mobile exhibition for the disabled — the large yellow caravan called the Visiting Aids Centre — the VAC for short. I had many enquiries from parents about ideas and toys and equipment for their disabled children, and I hope that I was able to give them information that was useful.

But it struck me that there were many areas that could not yet be visited by the VAC and that the people living in them might not be able to find the information they need, or find someone to answer their questions. Now, in this regular Spastics News feature, I hope that questions may be answered. If you have any difficulties as to where a particular piece of equipment may be obtained, please write to me here at The Spastics Society and I will try to supply that information. Also I hope that if there are any problems in the home that seem difficult to solve, that you will write to me and I will try to offer some solutions. My aim is to publish your letters along with an answer in this column, but if this is not possible then a reply

will be sent to you through the post.

I have been very fortunate to have an offer of help from Mr. A. Mitchell, The Spastics Society's Supplies Officer and the man responsible for the buying service that is offered to parents, local authorities and hospitals.

By buying in bulk he is able to offer selected articles to parents at a more reasonable rate. He also imports small quantities of special equipment and toys from abroad, and offers these for sale to parents, hospitals and local authorities. Mr. Mitchell will be keeping me up-to-date with the availability of articles as well as notifying me of new developments that come on to the market. This information I will also include in the articles so that I can keep you informed as to what is available in order to help you manage more easily at home.

Please address all correspondence to Adrian van Loo, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London, W1 4EQ. I will be looking forward to hearing from you.

A comprehensive door-to-door survey completed by Lewisham Council has revealed the disturbing fact that one in 10 of all Deptford households contains a disabled person. The survey was carried out by volunteers supervised by the research staff of the Social Services Department, under Section 1 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act.

Useful new guide to services

THE Health and Social Service Journal has published an invaluable guide for all those who are interested on a personal or professional basis, in the health and social services operating in this country.

Entitled "A Handbook of Organisations," it is by no means comprehensive, but the omissions are almost exclusively the newly started or very obscure charities. The handbook grew from an information display at London's King's Fund Centre, and shows organisations first by classification, i.e. welfare, education, etc., and then alphabetically.

An accompanying paragraph describes as concisely as possible the aims, nature and method of each organisation.

"A Handbook of Organisations" is compiled and edited by Irfon Roberts, M.A., F.H.A., and is available from King's Fund Centre, 24 Nutford Place, London, W1H 6AN, at a cost of 20p, including postage.

Devoted Group worker dies

WE regret to announce the death of Mrs. Barnes, Chairman of the South West Middlesex Spastics Society, of which she was a founder member in 1953.

She also helped the North Surrey Group and was on the committee of the Central Middlesex Spastics Welfare Society, for whom she edited a newsletter.

A childhood illness left her with a heart condition which lasted all her adult life, but she never let it interfere with her many interests.

Mr. Barnes is Secretary of the South West Middlesex group.

Some mothers do have 'em! Here's Michael Crawford a bit smarter sartorially than Frank, his counterpart in the television series, but looking just as bewildered with two Playboy Club's Bunnies, Ginger and Rachel, either side of him.

It was all part of the festivities at the Hammersmith Palais organised for BBC staff. And at the end of the evening the proceeds from the tickets, the tombola and the raffle that Michael seems to be having a little difficulty with, were presented by the two Bunnies to him for The Spastics Society. The total came to £400.

Your best buys for February

SO far, it hasn't been a relaxing kind of year, what with one thing and another, but spring is drawing nearer and already snowdrops and primroses are showing their heads as an earnest of brighter times ahead. There are enlivening days to look forward to in February, especially Pancake Day, when there's the fun of cooking the pancakes as well as the pleasure of eating them.

Shopping won't be too bad, even though with winter weather there is never a wide range of home-grown produce.

Certainly, our vegetables will be fresh, and that is important as far as buying greenstuffs is concerned. Cabbage, including savoys, spinach, kale and spring greens will be easy to get. More cauliflowers will be about as well, and they will be welcome after a period when they have been both scarce and expensive.

Root crops, which are invaluable at this time of year, will be plentiful and much can be done with potatoes, swedes, parsnips, carrots, turnips, onions and leeks, to make meals both colourful and interesting.

Just to make things easier for you, here is a recipe for a light-on-the-purse meal that will suit four large appetites or five to six smaller ones:



SHEPHERD'S DELIGHT

1 lb. minced beef
2 medium-sized onions, thinly sliced

1 oz. dripping

1 level tablespoon flour

1 level tablespoon curry powder
Salt and pepper

1 level tablespoon tomato chutney
1/2 teacups stock

For topping:

1 1/2 lb. potatoes
1 oz. home-produced butter

1 oz. home-produced Cheddar cheese, grated

Melt dripping in a saucepan and gently fry onions until soft,

You'll find saladstuffs more difficult. Lettuces will be on the small side—they need sun to fill them out, celery could be rather variable in quality, watercress will be on the short side both in quality and size, as that also wants more sun, but beetroots, salad onions and salad cress will help to fill the salad bowl, as will using red cabbage, young spinach and shredded Brussels sprouts.

Home-produced meat of prime quality will be abundant, and as the cheap cuts are as nutritious as the prime ones, you can buy stewing rather than frying steak, breast of lamb instead of leg, and belly of pork in place of chops without worrying about the family starving!

There are plenty of home-grown apples coming regularly from cold store, so there is no need to go short with fruit, and to help with pudding ideas don't forget that forced rhubarb is now in season.

Just to make things easier for you, here is a recipe for a light-on-the-purse meal that will suit four large appetites or five to six smaller ones:



stir in flour and curry powder, cook for a minute or two, then slowly add the stock, bring to boil, lower heat, simmer until the sauce has thickened. Stir in the meat, breaking up any lumps. Cover and cook over low heat for 20 minutes, add salt, pepper and chutney, mix with a spoon and cook for a further 15 minutes, or until the meat is tender. Drain off surplus liquid for use as gravy when serving. Meanwhile, peel and boil the potatoes. When cooked, drain, season, stir in the butter and grated cheese. Transfer the meat to a lightly greased fireproof dish, cover with potato mixture and pop into a hot oven, 425°F, Mark 7, for about 15 minutes until the potato topping is lightly browned and crisp. Serve piping hot with seasonal vegetables.

Over a period of seven weeks, members of the Majestic Bingo and Social Club, Clapham, in South London, donated a percentage of prize money from their games into a charity fund.

This enabled the club to buy £300 worth of new toys for spastic children.

Picture shows Mr. H. J. Sinfield, right, manager of the Majestic Club, handing over the wide selection of toys to Stuart Scott, local appeals officer for The Spastics Society's London Region.

Loss to Ingfield Manor

ONE of the few original members of staff at the Society's Ingfield Manor School for Spastics at Billingshurst, Sussex, Joan Barnes has died suddenly at the age of 51.

Originally a teacher of physical education, Miss Barnes qualified as a physiotherapist and worked with spastic children in West Ham, London.

She was sponsored by the Society to study the Bobath training method, and was appointed senior physiotherapist to Ingfield Manor when the school opened in 1962.

She died in hospital at Hastings as the result of a heart complaint.

Miss Edna Varty, Headmistress of Ingfield Manor, said: "Miss Barnes was a very energetic and hard worker with great concern for the physical progress of the children. When she was convinced that something might benefit the children, she put great effort into helping me make it work and in the last three years had been very active in helping to consolidate methods based on conductive education."



£300 Severn Bridge walk

A SPONSORED walk across the Severn Bridge from Bristol to Newport has raised £300 for the Monmouthshire Spastics Society.

The 35-mile trek was organised by Newport nightclub owners Lambros and George Luka, with the assistance of George and Edna Hamer of Risca, who have a spastic son.

Several well-known people in the entertainment business at Bristol took part in the walk.

You wanted to know more about speech "miracle"

READERS of Spastics News may remember a recent story about an 'unscrambler' device which had been successfully used to help make a spastic child's speech intelligible.

The story evoked wide interest — local groups, speech therapists, and other voluntary organisations all contacted us to ask "where they could get hold" of this miraculous invention. The simple answer is that they can't. The "unscrambler" is an American device still very much in its infancy, and is only suitable for those spastics who can make sounds approximating to the correct speech sounds. It cannot help the "dumb to speak."

What it may mean is that spastic children being born now will be able to make themselves understood in the future.

The Sunday Times medical correspondent, Oliver Gillie, recently reported on the case fully and, with the newspaper's kind permission, we publish the picture together with a photograph of Eddie from "Scope."



— and here is Eddie's story

TEN-YEAR-OLD Eddie Bartz was committed to a mental hospital because nobody could understand a word he said. Eddie is spastic and his speech was so unintelligible that he was thought to be mentally retarded. But now American telephone engineers have been able to "unscramble" Eddie's speech, and tests show that his IQ is above average.

They have invented a speech clarifier which offers new hope to four out of ten spastic children with a speech defect.

The miniature electronic device filters Eddie's voice and amplifies it. He had difficulty co-ordinating his breathing with his lip and tongue movements, but his clarifier takes most of the effort out of his speech movements. He does not need to take so many deep breaths or try to speak louder, and so he is freer to concentrate on correct pronunciation.

A small microphone is attached to Eddie's head and a battery powered electronic processing unit is slung from the back of his wheelchair. The microphone could be fitted into spectacles. So far 12 of the individually made devices have been built and another 50 are on the way.

"The best thing about it," says Eddie, "is that I can be understood by strangers."

A NOVEL competition has been held in aid of the Colchester Spastics Society.

Two Swiss-made watches (lady's and gentleman's models) were wound up by the Editor of a local newspaper. Then they were sealed in a package by Miss Ada Steward, group secretary and Hospital Matron.

The seals were broken about a month later and members of the public were invited, for a small fee, to guess at what time the watches had stopped.

Those guessing the nearest times received the watches as prizes.

A wine and cheese party, opened by television and radio personality David Jacobs, was held by Purley branch of Croydon and District Spastics Society. Proceeds amounted to nearly £300.

The Spastics Society CASTLE PRIORY COLLEGE

TRAINING COURSES FOR HOUSEPARENTS/ CARE STAFF—1974/75

a) Residential Care of Handicapped Children b) Care of Handicapped Adults

Applications are invited for these two 15-month Residential Courses at Castle Priory College, Wallingford, commencing in September 1974. Candidates must have at least one year's full-time experience of work with children or adults, and the minimum age for consideration is 18.

Both courses include practical periods spent in special schools for handicapped children, care units for the mentally handicapped, and other residential situations, as well as sessions in College. The courses work in parallel and give all participants an awareness of the work encountered in a whole range of care establishments, whilst enabling them to develop particular skills for the two main fields of care.

Requests for application forms and other information, including financial arrangements, should be made forthwith to the Senior Tutor, Castle Priory College, Thames Street, Wallingford, Berks.

TV appeal for Possum people

THERE can be few people who, having heard of Possum, have not also heard of Hilary Pole, M.B.E., said to be the most disabled woman in Britain.

Last month people all over Britain had a chance to find out what Possum is all about, when the Possum Users' Association broadcast an appeal on BBC TV, in which Hilary "starred."

Dick Boydell, of the Society's Oakwood Centre, and last year's winner of the Society's Achievement Award, also appeared on the programme, demonstrating his Possum typewriter.

The appeal was made by Cliff Morgan, the famous rugby player and commentator.

Spastic helps lonely people with "hidden handicaps"

PEOPLE, spastics among them, have got used to the idea that spastics need a helping hand, but June Melzer wants to do the reverse. A spastic herself, her aim in life is to aid those who simply cannot cope.

Her handicap is obvious and confines her to a wheelchair, but three times a week she puts in a 13-hour all-night stint helping those

whose handicaps are invisible but just as crippling—homeless youths who are often rough and violent.

They drift into a drab church hall in Birmingham and June sits with them and chats. She explained: "People were quite wary of me at first and I was not altogether accepted. But once they got used to the wheelchair my handicap didn't matter. The wheelchair is a useful ice-breaker."

"If you want to make a success of being handicapped, you have to be interested in people. I feel I am lucky because emotionally and psychologically I can cope. The physical bit is the least problem."

"These people with hidden handicaps are far more vulnerable and unable to cope. There are so many people about who need love and support."

June also has a day-time job working on a research project to assess the situation of homeless young people in Birmingham.

Since her physical activity is virtually reduced to the use of one finger she is enabled to do this by the Community Service Volunteer organisation which assigned her the services of a full-time volunteer, Lynn Warner.

Lynn helps her at her college flat and drives her around in a Land Rover.

June is studying social responsibilities at Selly Oak College. She has a psychology degree from Manchester University, but in the year since she graduated every effort to get a job was thwarted. A hospital where she worked part-time with drug addicts would not take her on full-time because she was a "fire risk," and an application for the job of warden at a girls' hostel was rejected because, it was said, she would be unable to defrost the fridge!

Now the Selly Oak course, she hopes, will give her the necessary administrative and practical experience to win her a full-time job as a social worker.

"The employment rejections have made me even more determined to get a job in the social structure — once I have proved to myself and society that I am capable of holding down a job within the system."

"Ideally, I would like to open a hostel of my own for people in need of supportive help."

Ex-pupils of Delarue School mourn first

Headmaster

MR. BERNARD DAVIES, M.B.E., B.Sc., first Headmaster of the Thomas Delarue School for Spastics, Tonbridge, died on December 30, aged 73. He had been ill for some years and was taken to hospital in Hereford on Boxing Day.

Thomas Delarue was the first ever grammar school for spastics and Mr. Davies made education a reality for hundreds of spastic children during his headship from 1955 to 1964.

A Welshman, he had had a varied career before he took over the reins of the school. As a youth he left school and joined the Royal Flying Corps, later the RAF, and served as a pilot for two years. He taught for two years and then joined ICI for eight years before becoming a primary school head in Kent. From 1933 to 1942 he was head of successively larger schools when he took the headship of a Home Office Approved School. Two of his pupils gained University entrance, the first time this having been achieved by any approved school pupil.

In 1949 he became Head of Lobstock Special School for Delicate Children. During the second world war he raised and commanded an ATC Squadron in Kent and then moved to Abergavenny, where he raised and commanded a company of the Brecknock Battalion of the Army Cadet Force.

In 1961 he was awarded the MBE, the first of the Society's staff to be honoured in this way.

Mr. Davies had a deep concern for all the children in his care, and it was not long before he was pushing for their provision once they had left his school. It was partly due to his work in this field that the Society went on to open the Oakwood Unit at Kelvedon. And it was as a member of the Educational Advisory Service that he pressed for an academic education and research unit such as has been set up at the University of London Institute of Education — the Department of Child Development.

On retirement he continued to concern himself with the welfare of spastics, lecturing, preparing educational material for publication, and undertaking specialised work at the Staff Training College.

At the time of Mr. Davies' retirement, Dr. C. Stevens, the late Director of the Society,



Picture shows Mr. Davies with H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh during a Royal visit to Thomas Delarue School.

paid tribute to him. "Real charity, a lively sense of duty to his Creator and to his fellow creatures, and a gracious wife whose unobtrusive help will always be remembered with gratitude by pupils and parents alike."

Mr. Davies and his wife retired to Ross-on-Wye. His funeral was held at Hereford at the beginning of January.

Tribute

In 1969, Mr. Davies had to undergo a serious internal operation and the next four years until his death were a constant fight against physical pain and depression. This struggle was supported by a brave, unshakably loyal and resilient wife.

And this was fitting, for in the private sphere Bernard Davies valued personal relationships, above all things. He was a man of rare quality, a man of great courage, steadfastness and integrity, who found deep delight in the best things of life — in love and friendship, a natural beauty, music, books, and convivial talk with his friends. All those people who knew him, and especially the spastic pupils who passed through his hands at Thomas Delarue School, will miss him with great personal sadness.

R. C. E. Cumplen,
Secretary,
The Spastics Society.

A CHARITY concert held at Woking, Surrey, has raised more than £400 for White Lodge Spastics Centre, Chertsey.

The show was compered by television actor Bernard Cribbins. During the evening there was an auction of items donated by Dame Sybil Thorndike, Sir Michael Redgrave, the late Sir Gerald Nabarro, Sir Barnes Wallis, Val Doonican, and Winston Churchill, M.P.



Group pioneer

dies at 81

MR. Frank Swale, who with his wife Mabel, was a founder member of the Lakes branch of the Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness Spastics Society, has died at the age of 81.

He took a passionate interest in many forms of social work, driving a hospital car to help local people, and was a member of the Royal British Legion and a voluntary warden of the National Park.

Born in Manchester, Mr. Swale was a pupil of Manchester Grammar School, and was a stockbroker before becoming an estate agent.

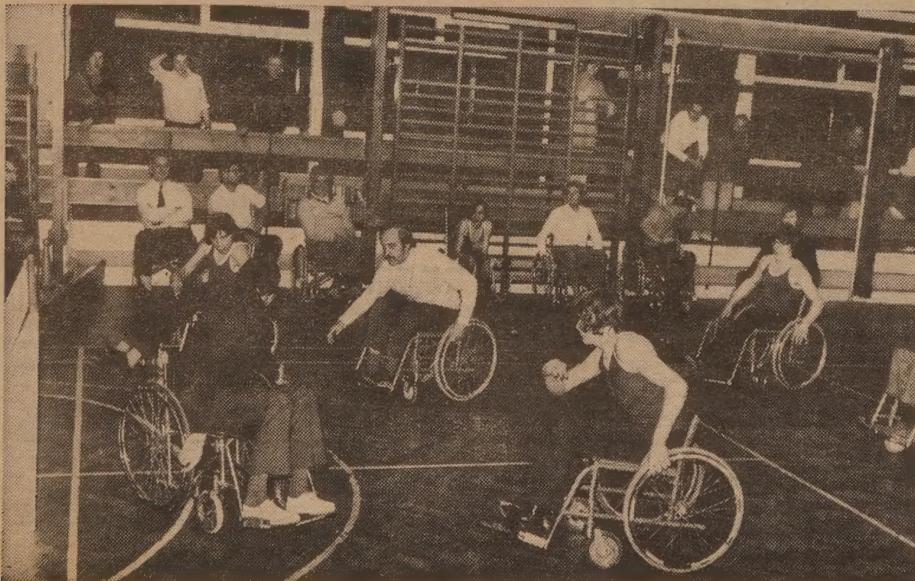
It was during the Second World War that he became deeply involved in youth hostel work and was responsible for the hostel, Derwent Hall in Derbyshire, for many years. In the fifties came the founding of The Spastics Society's Lakeland branch and he helped raise many thousands of pounds, some of which went into the setting up of Irton Hall School for Spastics. Mr. Swale was a member of the Management Committee of Irton Hall with his wife. He never sought office, but preferred to remain "just a committee member," said his widow. He also assisted the Scalesheugh Hall Management Committee until 1972.

Ill-health, including two severe strokes, hindered his voluntary work towards the end of his life.

A dance held at the Fountain Inn, Abberley, Worcestershire, by licensee Mr. Cyril Hughes and his wife, Frances, raised more than £200 for spastics in the Kidderminster area.

Members of Tunbridge Wells Lions Club took to wheelchairs when they visited the Society's Thomas Delarue School in Kent for an evening of sport recently. The home team beat the visitors at hockey and wheelchair football, but the Lions won a basketball game.

Picture by courtesy of Kent and Sussex Courier



Debbie's dad tops the pops with music fans and local group

THE flashing, strident world of "Top of the Pops" and the more sober tones of The Spastics Society's Annual General Meetings are equally familiar to pop-star Clifford T. Ward.

For the singer-songwriter who made his name with his song "Gaye" which rose to the top of the charts all round the world, has a spastic daughter. And now, with his latest album "Mantel Pieces," he has dedicated one track to Debbie and all other handicapped children.

Clifford's place in the spotlight has been the result of years of hard work. He left school and worked professionally for three years with a pop group from his native Worcestershire. The group was known as 'The Secrets' and they made, according to Clifford: 'forgettable records.' They travelled widely, but in the end broke up through 'lack of success.'

Clifford recalled: "The life is great fun for the first two months but, after a while, living out of a suitcase seven nights a week and working till the early hours of the morning is soul-destroying."

Teacher

He had all the right academic qualifications and so he opted for teachers' training college. One reason was the relief of getting out of the pop-scene then. The other reason was Debbie.

"My wife, Pat, and I were childhood sweethearts. We met at school—she was in the year below me. We got married when we were 17. When Debbie was born she was three months premature. She was rushed to a special hospital and put in an incubator, but she suffered brain damage which has left her without the use of her legs and also slightly affects her right hand. At about the same time that we began to realise something was wrong we had a son, Martin.

"Nobody warned us that as a result of her birth she might be disabled—we were left to find out for ourselves. Gradually we saw that, although she was as bright as a button mentally, she couldn't crawl or do the things that babies of her age were doing. Travelling with the pop group meant that Pat had to cope with it all. Obviously, when we first realised it we were sorry for ourselves and Debbie, but now we count

our blessings that the handicap wasn't worse."

But the life of the pop world remained a reality for Clifford, even while he taught English and drama to the children at North Bromsgrove High School.

He continued to write and record songs—John Peel, the Radio One disc jockey, liked them and signed Clifford up for his company, Dandelion. When that company ceased to exist, Clifford was taken on by Tony Stratton-Smith of Charisma records.

"Home Thoughts From Abroad" and a single from it, "Gaye," took off and suddenly the children he taught were bringing their transistor radios to school to find out how high in the charts "Sir" was each week. "They were amazed at being able to read about me



Clifford T. Ward

in their magazines, like 'Jackie'."

The demands of his new career, with appearances on "Top of the Pops" meant that Clifford had to make the decision to stay at school or go back into the pop world. The end of the last school year saw him saying goodbye to school, along with all the other leavers.

"I enjoyed teaching—especially drama—but I hate the system. I know this business is precarious, but I wouldn't want

to go back into teaching even if all this came to an end."

There is not much likelihood of that at the moment, because he is booked to appear all over the world, starting with appearances on American television, and he has still got a lot of songs to write.

All of which means that he has little time to spend at the new home he has bought near Kidderminster.

"It's a bungalow, so that Debbie has maximum freedom to move around in her wheelchair."

She is at the Society's Thomas Delarue School and settling down to life at boarding school. She has two brothers, Martin, aged nine, and seven-year-old Sam.

"All three have grown very blasé about my success. Although Debbie lists all the kids I've got to send signed photos to, her favourites are Dave Bowie and Gary Glitter!"

One thing Clifford is determined to find the time for is the Kidderminster and District Spastics Association. He says proudly that he has been on the executive committee for the last seven years. And adds: "I very much hope that if my success continues to develop, I shall in some way be able to help the cause of spastics even more."

Incontinence with confidence



INCO PRODUCTS give all incontinent patients both young and old the confidence required to lead as normal a life as possible.

INCO GARMENTS — this washable garment is suitable for all ages of both sexes, being available in seven sizes (24" - 58" hips). Two new larger sizes are now available. New waist tapes have been added for greater comfort and convenience when changing the liner. Inco Garments are available from chemists and free from most Local Health Authorities.

INCO ROLL — an absorbent disposable liner in roll form which can be cut to any required length.

INCO UNDERPADS highly absorbent protective pads with a new soft facing. Available in two sizes 16½" x 24" and 30" x 24" through most local Authorities. The 16½" x 24" underpad can also be bought from chemists in packets of ten.

Robinsons OF CHESTERFIELD



NOW 2 LARGER SIZES WITH WAIST TAPES

Deadline near for literary competition

HAVE you sent in your entry for the literary contest for spastics? Time is getting short, so make sure you don't miss the closing date of February 28th. You could win a cash prize for your effort, whether you send in an article or a poem, and you could meet the panel of well-known personalities who will be judging the entries, at the prize-giving reception which will be held during Spastics Week.

Mrs. Harold Wilson has again agreed to present the prizes, and among other judges who will be present are journalist Lynda Lee-Potter, whose shrewd and witty observations on life in general appear in the Daily Mail each week, and Pamela Carmichael, editor of the popular monthly *She* magazine.

So come on, all you writers and would-be authors — once you get started it really is quite easy. Everyone has a story to tell, either about themselves, something they have seen, or something that has happened to them — or to someone they know; think back! Or what about your ideas for changing the world, or even a part of it, new laws you would like passed, attitudes that make you furious, a particularly eventful holiday, special interests or ambitions, romance, who you'd like to change places with for a while, and why! Your story or article can be profound or light-hearted; witty or sad, and you can let your imagination run riot.

Poetry

Don't forget there is a poetry section to the contest, too. You can submit poetry as well as articles, if you feel like trying your luck at both. We always have a most impressive number of poems submitted, from simple single verses to poems of epic length and character.

Every entry is carefully read and considered and you do not lose your chance if your spelling or writing are a bit shaky — it is what you have to say that is important. We don't expect deathless prose — after all, there aren't too many William Shakespeares around, but every year our judging panels have commented especially on the shrewd observations and the outstanding sense of humour that so many articles have revealed, and the wonderfully fertile imaginations.

We do not mind how many entries you send in — just keep them coming and your effort might win YOU a cash prize. All winners will be notified by post around the middle of April and we shall look forward to meeting them at the prize giving during Spastics Week.

Just a final reminder: There are four categories to the contest: (1) schoolchildren up to 16; (2) young adults 17 to 25; (3) the over 25s; (4) poetry. There are cash prizes for the winners in each section — the best entries from a male and a female. You can get entry forms from Spastics News or direct from the organiser Mrs. Nina Heycock, 88/89 Queen's Gate South, Kensington, London SW7 5AA. You can have as many entry forms as you wish.

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Awards for 'Like Other People'

MR. DORRIEN BELSON, Chairman of The Spastics Society, and Mr. JAMES LORING, the Director, pictured below looking at four trophies won by the film "Like Other People."

The film, which is about the sexual and emotional needs of the handicapped, has gathered awards from all over the world. Made by Kestrel and sponsored by the Mental Health Film Council, it was based on a brief by James Lorong.

Production costs were borne largely by The Spastics Society and contributions were made by the British Epilepsy Association, the National Society for Mentally Handicapped Children, and the National Association for Mental Health.

The pearl award which Mr. Lorong holds in the picture is worth about £2,000. It was the first prize in the Mercato Internazionale del Film, TV-Film e Documentario Festival, Milan 1972. The trophies on the table are, left to right, the Silver Award for Category H in the British Sponsored Film Festival, 1973; the prize for the best film over 30 minutes in the Melbourne Film Festival, 1973, and Second Prix, Varna, 1973, Cinquième Festival, International de Films Croix-Rouge de la Sante.



Disabled parents praise their 'wonderful children'

WHEN Wendy Taylor was just two she was dressing herself and helping to dress her new-born baby sister Heather. "A proper little mother she was," recalled Mrs. Edith Taylor, of her elder daughter now aged 10.

For Wendy and Heather's parents are both disabled. Their father, Geoff, is a spastic and paralysed down one side, while Edith has been handicapped by meningitis and cannot walk outside her Darlington home.

Struggle

It has meant that Wendy and Heather, in their mother's words, have "brought themselves up. It was a proper struggle bringing up the bairns — but I've no regrets. They're two bairns who have always been able to make a cup of tea. They can't cook a proper meal yet — but you can't expect them to at their age. But it doesn't follow that just because both

parents are disabled that the children should be slaves."

She admits, though, that in many ways the children have been handicapped by having handicapped parents.

"We've never been able to

play with them. I've never been able to go shopping with them for clothes and it's not easy to go out with them.

"They can't be as free as other bairns are — running about — unless my sister or some one can look after them.

"But I wouldn't say they've come to any harm. They're wonderful children."

Community spirit played its part, too, for there were times of crisis when, if it had not been for friends and neighbours rallying around, the little girls would have been put into a "home."

An old age pensioner cared for them and a nursery teacher took them to and from school so that the family should not be broken up.

And Mrs. Taylor has no time for those unkind jokes about mothers-in-law. "Mine is marvellous — I just don't know how we could have managed without her at all," she said.

Pictured above: Geoff and Edith Taylor with their "wonderful children," Wendy 10, and Heather aged eight.

Picture by courtesy of Evening Dispatch, Darlington

Switch in to Gonks after TV

SOME people talk, and some people do.

So while population experts were merely worrying about the 10.30 p.m. TV close-down resulting in an eventual baby boom, the Preston and District Spastics Group came up with a counter-inflationary idea.

This charitable body used a small poster to ask local people to put that television void to good use by making a gonk which can be sold at its Annual Fair in the Guild Hall, Preston, on March 2nd. There will be prizes for the best gonks. Other soft toys for sale will be welcomed, too.

Since proceeds from the fair play an important part in helping the Preston group of volunteers to maintain their day and treatment centre for spastic children and young adolescents, they are hoping for full community support.

As Mrs. Olive Wallace, the group's honorary secretary, stresses: "With 28 handicapped youngsters to care for, inflation has hit us especially hard. Our costs rose by 9 per cent last year and will increase much more this year. We're very grateful that a number of churches, schools and other organisations and individuals are helping with stalls and gifts. But we need still more help from everyone if we are to reach our target figure of £2,000."



PETTY Officers of HMS Tiger saved up all their oddments of foreign currency while on a recent world cruise, and when they returned to their home port of Portsmouth, used the money to buy presents for spastic children at the day centre run by the Gosport, Fareham and District Spastics Society.

Ingfield mother on radio

THE Society's Ingfield Manor School in Sussex will be the subject of a five-minute talk on *Woman's Hour* on Wednesday, 13th February.

Under the title, "So what's normal?" Ann Purser, journalist and mother of a spastic child at Ingfield, will be talking about communication with handicapped people. This is based on her experience of a week working at the school.

"Woman's Hour" is broadcast on Radio 4, commencing at 1.45 p.m., and it is expected that Mrs. Purser's contribution will be heard about 2.02 p.m. immediately after a short news bulletin.

Lets hope it's catching

DURING the past three years Janet Hewson, aged 15, from Carlisle, and her friends, Pauline and Shelagh Hill, have raised over £80 for spastics.

They collect goods from neighbours and hold an annual rummage sale in the garden. This year's effort enabled them to purchase a Buggy Major for a severely handicapped spastic.

Said Mr. J. B. Jackson, General Secretary of the Cumberland, Westmorland and Furness Spastics Society: "We congratulate the girls and only wish that their enthusiasm, generosity and industry was more infectious."

A picture appeared in last month's issue of Spastics News showing Danny La Rue and friends at his Gala Evening. Due to error the caption referred to the Hon. David Ogilvy instead of the Hon. James Ogilvy, and we apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Bedfordshire Spastics Society once again beat all records with their annual bazaar, which this year brought in over £2,430.

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